

Managing the Market

Procurement Practices and Private Sector Wildfire Response Capacity

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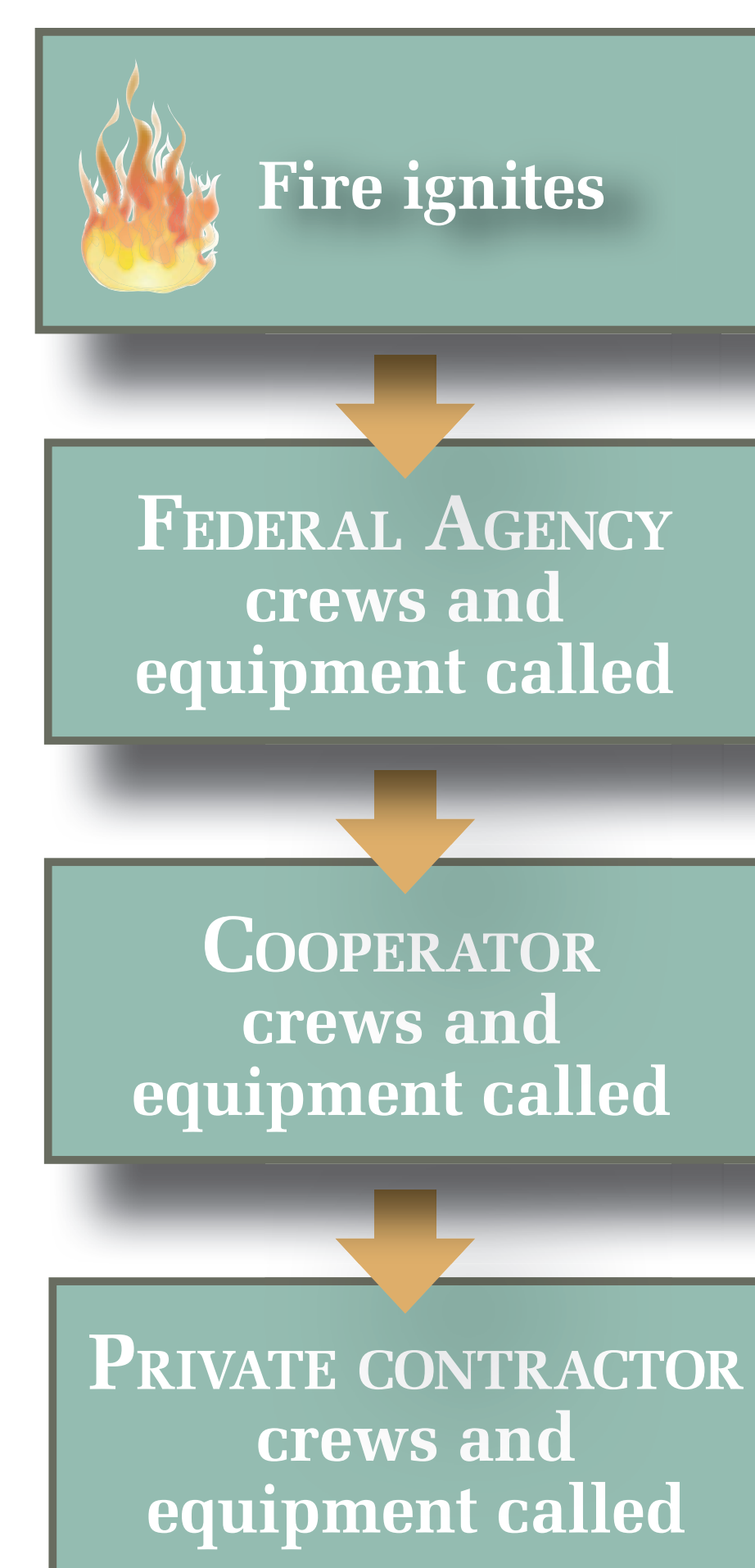
About

Sustaining wildfire response capacity, including institutional organization, skilled workforces, facilities, and equipment is critical to both agencies and fire-affected communities. Market conditions affect whether land management agencies can fulfill their fire suppression procurement needs, which vary considerably season to season. As a major purchaser of fire suppression services, the Forest Service is a market manager. Its contracting processes, technical requirements, and dispatching protocols all structure the market for these goods and services, which in turn influence the business models, and competitiveness of private businesses that provide suppression-related goods and services.

This project explores the effects of Forest Service fire suppression contracting on contracting markets and business capacity, including:

1. How administrative practices influence the contracting market structure.
2. What business models suppression contractors use to develop and maintain their businesses and meet wildfire suppression needs.

How administrative practices influence contracting market structure



As the Forest Service faces unprecedented challenges in wildfire suppression, it increasingly depends on private wildfire suppression services. The processes and procedures employed for contracting such resources can be complex and strongly influence the contracting market structure. Our research outlines and illustrates these processes and procedures, and lays the groundwork for further investigation of their impacts on wildfire suppression market structure and capacity.

How contractors develop and maintain businesses to meet suppression needs

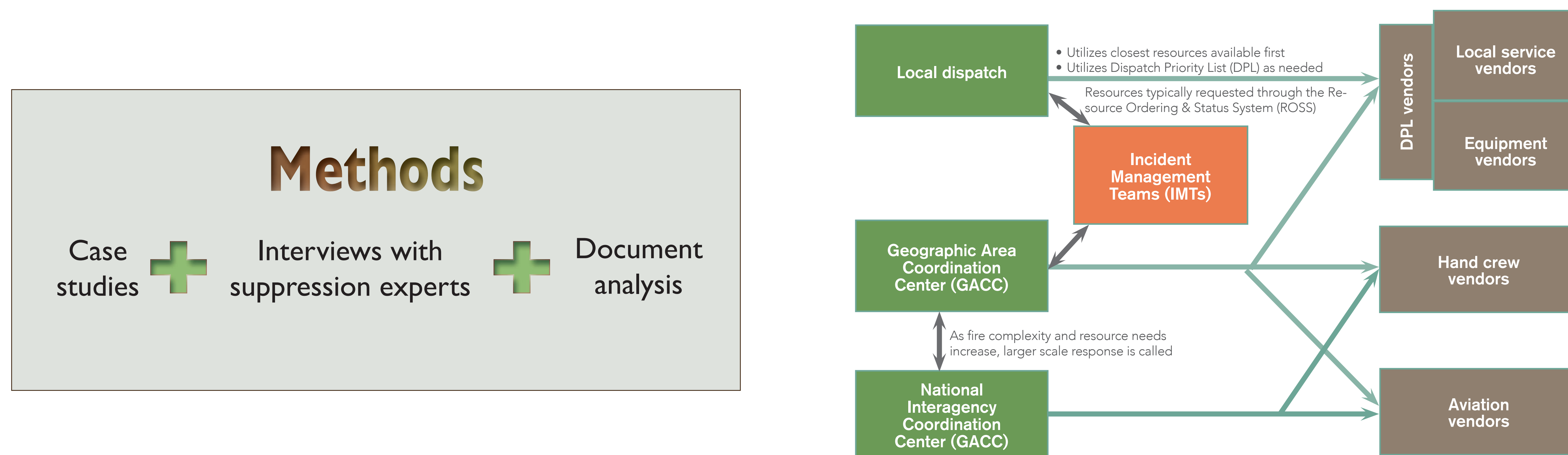
“Call when needed:” Private contracting for wildfire suppression in an unpredictable work environment. Although U.S. Forest Service reliance on private wildfire suppression contractors has increased over time, little is known about private contracting businesses, in particular how they navigate the same fundamental challenge: to maintain and grow their businesses that directly depend on unpredictable fire seasons and agency needs. Contracting businesses must balance investments in crews and equipment with uncertain demand to remain viable through both busy and slow wildfire seasons.

Our research to date has found that contractors are navigating this unpredictable marketplace by:

- Buffering from unpredictable demand by diversifying services and when, where, and how equipment and crews can be used.
- Relying on agency and other cooperator relationships for preseason contracting and dispatch communication.
- Increasing collaboration and communication to facilitate support and enhanced learning.



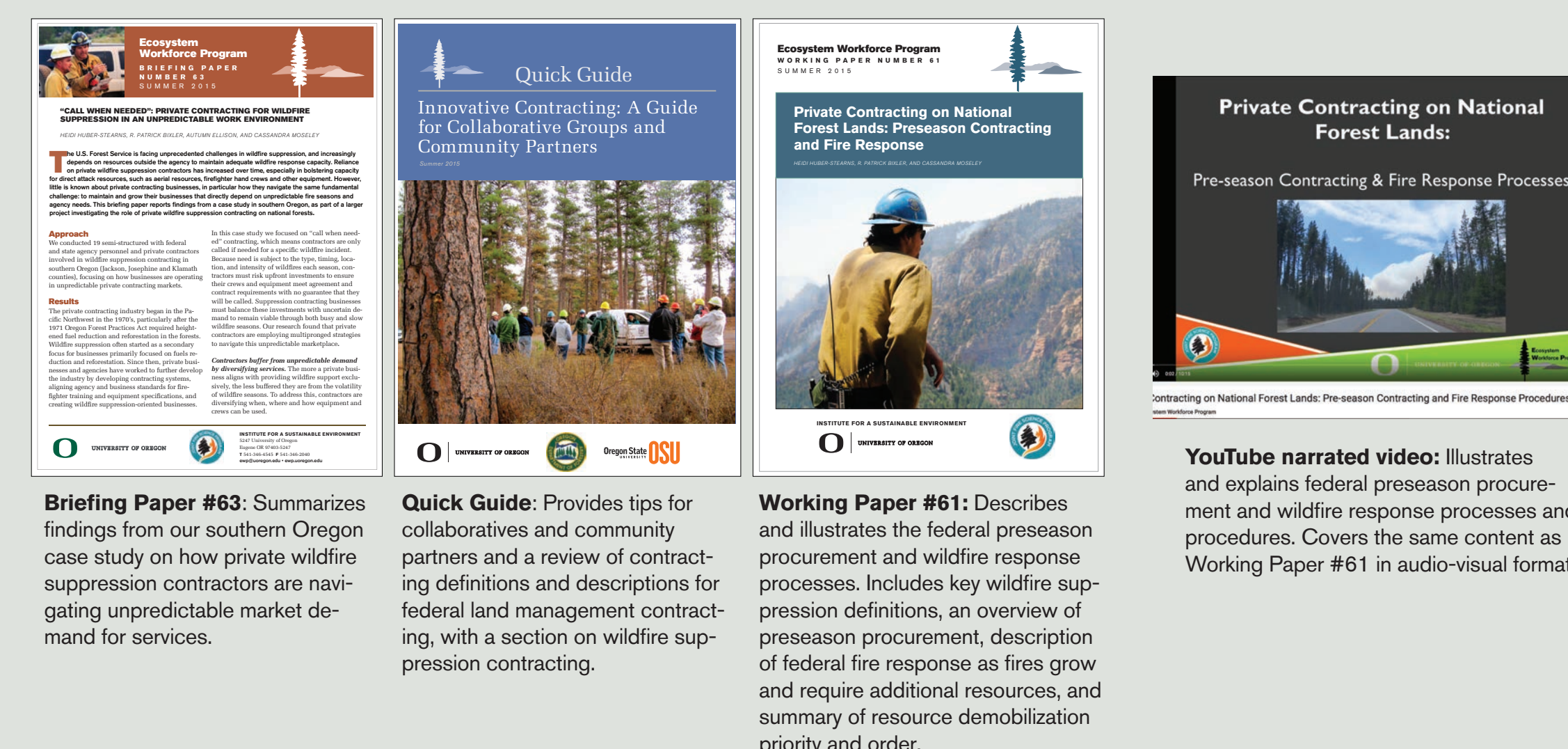
Federal agency wildfire response process once private vendors are called:



Methods

Case studies + Interviews with suppression experts + Document analysis

Resources



This poster presented by:

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For more information, visit the project website
ewp.uoregon.edu/managingthemarket